

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 SPM-01 SWF-02 EB-11 CIEP-03

OMB-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 IO-14 STR-08 /175 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3191

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN FOODGRAIN SITUATION

REF: NEW DELHI 10305

BEGIN SUMMARY: WITH FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN MONSOON ACTIVITY, THE PAST WEEK HAS BEEN THE BEST INDIA'S HAD TO DATE DURING THE CURRENT MONSOON SEASON. THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THIS YEAR'S SOUTHWEST MONSOON IS SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THE GOOD TO EXCELLENT MONSOONS OF 1970, 1971, AND 1973, BUT SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN THE POOR 1972 MONSOON. BASED ON CONDITIONS TO DATE, WE CURRENTLY ESTIMATE THAT THIS YEAR'S FALL/WINTER FOODGRAIN HARVEST WILL BE IN THE RANGE OF 59-64 MILLION TONS. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT SINCE THE FIRST OF APRIL 1974, INDIA HAS

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CONTRACTED FOR THE IMPORT OF 1.95 MILLION TONS OFFOODGRAINS

FOR ARRIVAL BEFORE THE END OF DECEMBER.

1. FOR THE SEOND WEEK IN A ROW, THERE WAS SOME FURTHER IMPROVE-MENT IN MONSOON ACTIVITY OVER INDIA. DURING THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 7, GENERALLY ALL OF SOUTH INDIA AND MOST OF MAHARASHTRA RECEIVED NORMAL OR ABOVE-NORMAL RAINFALL. SEVERAL PARTS OF NORTHERN AND EXTREME NORTHEASTERN INDIA ALSO RECEIVED MODERATE TO HEAVY RAINS WITH CENTRAL INDIA FROM THE EAST TO WEST COASTS RECEIVING BELOW-NORMAL PRECIPITATION. THIS PAST WEEK HAS BEEN THE BEST INDIA HAS HAD TO DATE DURING THE CURRENT MONSOON SEASON WITH AREAS ACCOUNTING FOR ROUGHLY HALF OF INDIA'S CEREAL GRAIN PRODUCTION RECEIVING NORMAL OR ABOVE-NORAML RAINFALL.

2. THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THIS YEAR'S SOUTHWEST MONSOON IS SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THE GOOD TO EXCELLENT MONSOONS OF 1970, 1971, AND 1973 BUT SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN THE POOR 1972 MONSOON. IN RELATION TO THE CURRENT MONSOON, THE 1972 MONSOON WAS STRONGER FROM ROUGHLY THE MIDDLE OF JUNE UP TO APPROXIMATELY MID-JULY BUT THEN DIMINISHED TO PRACTICALLY NOTHING UNTIL APPROXIMATELY THE FIRST WEEK IN AUGUST. WHETHER THE 1974 MONSOON WILL CONTINUE TO BE BETTER THAN THE 1972 MONSOON WILL DEPEND ON ITS PERFORMANCE FOR THE BALANCE OF THE SEASON.

3. THE GOI'S TARGET FOR FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION DURING THE CURRENT KHARIF SEASON (MEAINLY FALL/WINTER-HARVESTED) HAS EBEEN SET AT 69 MILLION TONS OUT OF A TOTAL FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION TARGET OF 118 MILLION TONS FOR 1974-75. ALTHOUGH IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO MAKE A PRECISE ESTIMATE OF THE SIZE OF THIS FALL'S FOODGRAIN HARVEST, WE TENTATIVELY ESTIMATE THATIT WILL FALL IN THE RANGE OF 59-64 MILLION TONS. THE ACTUAL OUTCOME WILL BE DEPENDENT ON WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR THE BALANCE OF THE SEASON. WITH THE BELOW-AVERAGE MONSOON, SO FAR, WE EXPECT ACREAGE AND YIELDS TO BE DOWN SOMEWHAT FROM LAST YEAR. OUR CURRENT ESTIMATE OF LAST YEAR'S (1973-74) KHARIFF CROP IS 66-67 MIL-LION TONS COMPARED TO THE GOI TARGET OF 67 MILLION. OFFICIAL GOI PUBLISHED DATA INDICATE THAT THE 1972-73 KHARIF FOODGRAIN CROP, WHICH SUFFERED FROM THE POOR 1972 MONSOON, WAS 57.2 MIL-LION TONS.

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4. PRIME MINISTER GANDHI VISITED GUJARAT AND MAHARASHTRA STATES

ON AUGUST 3 TO OBTAIN A FIRST-HAND VIEW OF THE FOOD AND AGRI-CULTURE SITUATION IN THE TWO STATES. THIS VISIT WAS IN CON-TINUATION OF TRIPS TO THE VARIOUS STATES WHICH THE PRIME MINISTERHAS BEEN MAKING RECENTLY TO ASCERTAIN FROM STATE OFFICIALS PROSPECTS FOR THE CURRENT KHARIF AS WELL AS THE

COMING RABI CROPS. CONGEN BOMBAY REPORTS THAT DURING HER VISIT TO POONA, THE PRIME MINISTER, FOR THE FIRST TIME, SEVERELY CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA FOR ITS FAILURE TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY FOODGRAINS. THIS WAS UNEXPECTED, GIVEN MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER'S REPUTATION AS A LEADING AGRICULTURAL EXPERT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA'S SUCCESS IN FIGHTING THE DROUGHT DURING 1972-73, BUT IS INDICATIVE OF MRS. GANDHI'S TOUGHER LINE AND POSTURE. SHE EXPRESSED HER DISSATISFACTION WITH THE STEADILY DECLINING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN MAHARASHTRA OVER THE LAST DECADE IN SPITE OF STEADILY RISING INVESTMENT IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. THE MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER REPORTEDLY ASSURED MRS. GANDHI THAT WITHIN THE NEXT THREE YEARS THE STATE WOULD ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD. ADDRESSING AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS AND TOP CIVIL OFFICIALS IN AHMEDABAD, THE PRIME MINISTER SET AN 18-MONTH TIME LIMIT FOR GUJARAT TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION.

5. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT SINCE THE FIRST OF APRIL, INDIA HAS CONTRACTED TO IMPORT 1.95 MILLION TONS OF FOODGRAINS, INCLUDING 1.52 MILLION TONS OF WHEAT AND .43 MILLION TONS OF SORGHUM. SHIPMENT IS REPORTED TO BE BETWEEN JUNE-OCTOBER WITH ARRIVAL IN INDIA BEFORE THE END OF DECEMBER. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT ALL OF THE SORGHUM IS FROM ARGENTINA. THE SHIPPING SCHEDULE FITS WITH WHAT WE HAVE HEARD, BUT AS YET, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN CONFIRMATION OF THE TOTAL QUANTITY OF WHEAT CONTRACTED FOR OR ITS ORIGIN, ALTHOUGH MOST IS BELIEVED TO BE FROM THE U.S.
MOYNIHAN

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